



LABOUR IN CRISIS

- WHY 'PROGRESSIVE PACT' WOULD BE DISASTROUS FOR THE LEFT
 - STARMER IN TROUBLE IN BATLEY & SPEN BY-ELECTION
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WHY THE COPS ARE CORRUPT TO THE CORE

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Socialist Worker

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THEY ARE ALL 'HOPELESS'

RESIST KILLER TORIES



DIDO HARDING, Boris Johnson and Matt Hancock have all got blood on their hands after their handling of the pandemic

DEMO Sat 26 June, 12 noon, BBC Portland Pl, London W1A 1AA ● Called by People's Assembly

NHS WORKERS SPEAK OUT

Tory Harding wants racist health service

by YURI PRASAD

HOW DARE Dido Harding, the would-be boss of the NHS, attack tens of thousands of "foreign" health workers working in Britain?

The failed Test and Trace tsar said this week that if she gets the NHS top job, she'd end the service's reliance on doctors and nurses who have come from abroad.

Her remarks chimed with those racists who think staff from outside Britain are inferior.

What an insult to doctors, nurses, healthcare assistants, porters and domestics that risked their health to provide care during the pandemic. "She



Health workers can beat racism

seems to think that the NHS doesn't need us," said Matilde, a community-based nursing assistant who came to Britain from Portugal five years ago.

"Has she got any idea about what we do? I don't think the NHS could cope if we weren't here."

Matilde, who is of mixed Angolan and Portuguese heritage, sees racism in Harding's comments.

"This racism already affects me in my job," she said.

"Some of my patients, and their families, are really horrible to me.

"They don't like me touching them—they treat me like I

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THE THINGS THEY SAY

'If you had a map of Covid's biggest effects now and a map of child deaths in 1850, they look remarkably similar. These are areas where deprivation has been prolonged and deeply entrenched'

Chris Whitty, government's chief medical officer

'1950s fishing trawler'

Naval architect Stephen Payne is not impressed by the proposed design of the new royal yacht

'Well, honestly, it feels like ancient history'

Health secretary Matt Hancock is not hurt at all that Boris Johnson thinks he is "fucking useless"

'There has been no barter, no trade deal'

Former House of Commons Speaker John Bercow denies he has joined the Labour Party to get a peerage

'A roadmap'

Labour leader Keir Starmer has announced a policy review that will take around 18 months. It was his third announcement of a new direction for the party



Ikea furniture giant fined for spying on 400 of its workers

DID IT happen in Britain? A French court has ordered Ikea to pay a fine of £860,000 after the furniture chain was found guilty of spying on staff.

Ikea France was accused of using private detectives and police officers to collect staff's private data.

This included illegally accessing their records in order to vet applicants for jobs.

The illegal surveillance covered about 400 people,

Last week former head of risk Jean-François Paris was given an 18-month suspended sentence and a £8,000 fine.

AFP news agency reports he once wanted to know how an employee could afford a new BMW convertible, and asked why a staff



WATCHING OUT for unions?

member in Bordeaux had "suddenly become a protester".

Former Ikea France CEO Jean-Louis Baillot was given a two-year suspended jail term and £40,000 fine.

His lawyer said Baillot was "shocked" by the ruling and was considering an appeal.

The 15 people in the dock at the Versailles court included top executives and former store managers.

Four police officers were also on trial for handing over confidential information.

The case centred on Ikea France's surveillance of staff during 2009-2012. Store

manager Patrick Soavi told the court how he had got personal data from a cousin in the police.

He asked police officer Alain Straboni to "cast an eye" over 49 candidates selected for Ikea jobs.

After a search on the police computer the reply was that three of them had committed minor offences.

Later Soavi sent another 68 names to be checked, and he was advised to drop five of the candidates.

"I recognise that I was very naïve and rather over-zealous, but we were being asked to carry out these checks, and once I'd put a foot inside this system it was too late," he said.

Ikea's annual bill for private investigators ran to nearly £500,000.

BORIS JOHNSON has been stripped of his mobile phone by "officials"—reportedly over MI5 security concerns. It emerged in April that his personal mobile number had been available on the internet for the last 15 years. A contact number for the prime minister was listed on the bottom of a press release when he was still shadow higher education minister in 2006. That document was still available online in 2021.

Hello, Dominic?

A MET police officer is to face trial after being charged with sexually assaulting a woman at a hotel while on duty. PC Rudville Walters, who is attached to the North West Command Unit, will appear for trial at Southwark Crown Court charged with sexual assault.

The trial was due to start on Monday.

Tories in no rush to have an election for sexist MP

WHEN THE Tory MP Rob Roberts was suspended from parliament for sexual misconduct, including propositioning a worker and telling them to be "less alluring", most assumed his political career was over.

But as often with Westminster sexual harassers, however, things aren't so simple.

The law says a by-election can only be triggered against an MP if they have been sanctioned by the Commons standards committee of MPs, as opposed to the independent panel.

Apparently Boris Johnson is content with the situation. It could be



Rob Roberts with Boris Johnson

a tricky by-election with Roberts having only won his seat in Delyn, north Wales, by 865 votes.

Downing Street voices have suggested that the Commons leader, Jacob Rees-Mogg, shouldn't rush to table a change to the rules.

Government stopped people getting sick pay

TORY ministers suppressed access to sick pay for people self-isolating with Covid-19 during a peak of the pandemic.

Leaked emails say the Treasury instructed senior government officials to conceal how a little-known function of the furlough scheme could be used to access help.

Senior officials in January and February were instructed to conceal the provision as Covid-19 cases surged, along with the furlough scheme's cost.

"Furlough can be used to cover self-isolation, but HMT (Her Majesty's Treasury) are reluctant to say this explicitly in

guidance because it could lead to employees being furloughed who do not need to be," a senior civil servant complained.

The official admitted that the usual payments received while self-isolating were so small that people avoided testing in case they couldn't go to work. "Incentive payments are too low to incentivise employees to take tests due to risk of loss of income," the person said.

Stripped of the bureaucratic language, it means the government knew there was a way to help people hurled into poverty because they were ill.

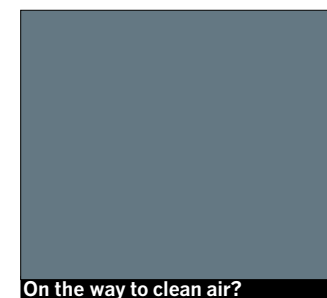
Millions of children breath poisoned air

MILLIONS OF British children attend schools where air pollution is worse than the World Health Organisation (WHO) limit.

An analysis found that more than a quarter of schools, from nurseries to sixth-form colleges, were in locations with high levels of small particle pollution.

This means an estimated 3.4 million children are learning in an unhealthy environment, said the charity Global Action Plan (Gap).

Tiny pollution particles, called PM2.5, are particularly dangerous as they not only harm the



On the way to clean air?

lungs but can pass into the bloodstream and affect many other parts of the body.

Developing bodies are especially vulnerable, and dirty air has already been linked to increased asthma, obesity and mental disorders in children.

"Schools should be safe places of learning, not places where students are at risk of health hazards," said Dr Maria Neira, director at the World Health Organisation. "These figures are unequivocally too high and harming children's health."

"There is no safe level of air pollution, and if we care about our children and their future, air pollution limits should reflect WHO guidelines."

A second report by experts at the University of Manchester also highlighted the danger to children's health from air pollution, which it said has recently been linked to increasing cognitive impairments, including ADHD.

The highest number of polluted schools identified in the analysis by Gap are in London and south east England.

But there are polluted schools across Britain with nearly 300 in Manchester postcodes M1 to M9 and in Portsmouth postcodes PO1 to PO9.

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Tory Harding plans attack on migrant NHS workers

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have a disease. I find that so hurtful. And now we have Dido Harding spreading fear among us, trying to turn NHS workers against each other."

Ifeoma is a support worker who has worked at an east London hospital for the past eight years.

She said Harding's comments made her angry because they showed no recognition of how difficult life can be for migrant workers in the NHS.

"Dido Harding sees me as a nobody," she told Socialist Worker.

"Back home in Nigeria, I was a scientist. I have a degree.

"But because of my status, I've found it hard to train to become an occupational therapist, which was my aim."

Ifeoma, her husband and her daughter all work for the health service.

But they've been told they will need approximately £21,000 in fees for her family to stay in Britain.

She takes home less than £1,600 a month and lives in temporary accommodation.

The NHS has since its birth relied on people such as Matilde and Ifeoma to come from abroad and work in hospitals here.

Saved

In the years after the Second World War, it was nurses from the Caribbean and Ireland that saved the health service.

Today, some 170,000 NHS staff are of a non-British nationality.

The real danger to the health service doesn't come from overseas workers, it is the huge number of unfilled vacancies—more than 100,000 overall.

Every ward in Britain is short-staffed. That puts patients at risk. Maria, an occupational therapist who came to Britain from Spain

15 years ago, says the real way to fill gaps would be to increase pay and decrease hours.

And, she says, there would need to be a huge recruitment campaign attracting staff from across the world, encouraging more people in Britain to train for NHS jobs.

She said that instead of addressing real issues, Harding's comments are a "slap in the face".

"I was so angry when I heard them," she said. "It brought back all the feelings of being unwelcome that went along with Brexit.

"This past year I've worked every shift. I've travelled on public

transport in a mask every shift. I've put my family at risk every shift.

I haven't been able to see my family in Spain for more than a year for fear of infecting them, and now this?

But Maria says the feeling in her hospital is one of unity, and she puts that down to having a strong, anti-racist union branch.

"The union helped make an atmosphere that meant I could be myself. I could be proudly Spanish and be accepted.

"We've done so much to educate and organise people around issues of Black Lives Matter and the murder of

George Floyd. I hope other hospitals will do the same.

"This is the way we can make people who feel vulnerable because of their background, feel they too are welcomed."

But for Harding, making the NHS safe for patients and welcoming for everyone are not primary objectives.

Instead the Tory peer plans to spread hatred and division, and of course, to impose more cuts.



What's your story?

Email with your ideas
reports@socialistworker.co.uk

THE FIGHT for decent pay goes hand in hand with the fight against scapegoating

Hospitals rushed by patient rise

HOSPITAL A&E departments and ambulance services across Britain are at breaking point as the number of patients soars.

So many people are desperate for treatment that numbers are now greater than the peak of winter 2019, the last before the pandemic.

At least 30 Hospitals across England have seen record numbers of patients during June.

North Middlesex hospital in north London last week declared an "internal incident" after some 700 patients came to its A&E unit.

That's a larger number than its last peak in January 2020.

University Hospitals of Leicester trust also recorded

Delays 'serious risk,' says memo

its busiest day ever, with 925 patients.

Doctors are reporting that nine-hour waits are common. Socialist Worker last week reported from Swansea, in Wales, where some elderly patients waited for more than 12 hours.

The increase is putting extra pressure on hospital beds, the numbers of which have been reduced during the coronavirus crisis to try and limit its spread.

The Royal College of Emergency Medicine this week warned the situation was very dangerous and that it was a "risk to patient safety" and that lives were potentially "at risk".

A leaked memo from West Midlands ambulance trust said the problem of delays at hospitals was now "the biggest risk to patient safety".

The growing crisis is spreading to every part of the NHS.

That's why demonstrations for the health service set for Saturday 3 July in towns and cities across Britain are so vital.

Go to keepournhspublic.com for details of protests near you

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Pupils given bad blood

THE INQUIRY into the contaminated blood scandal is set to restart this week.

It will focus on Treloar College school in Hampshire where 89 haemophiliac pupils were given Factor VIII blood treatment on-site in the 1970s and 80s.

A total of 72 pupils are known to have subsequently died after contracting Hepatitis B and C and HIV from unscreened blood and plasma bought from the US.

Many more were infected. It is thought that as many as 3,000

people across Britain died as a result of the scandal.

It was the subject of an elaborate cover-up by both the medical establishment and various governments.

In 1983, then health minister Kenneth Clarke denied any threat was posed by Factor VIII.

He told parliament, "There is no conclusive evidence that Aids is transmitted by blood products."

But recently revealed documents show that the department of health was aware of the danger.

Contaminated blood
killed thousands



Why a progressive alliance won't save Labour

The Tories lost the Chesham and Amersham by-election to the Liberal Democrats last week. But, argues **Charlie Kimber**, that must not lead Labour to team up with them

THE LIBERAL Democrats' win in the Chesham and Amersham by-election has sparked hopes that the Tories' "blue wall" of seats in the south of England could be collapsing.

And it has revived agitation for a "progressive alliance" of Labour, Lib Dems, Greens and nationalists to turf out Boris Johnson at the next election.

In the 13 previous elections since the seat was created in 1974, the Conservatives had never received less than 50 percent of the vote. Last Thursday they took just 36 percent.

The specific issues that moved votes included fears that the HS2 rail line is tearing up parts of the local environment—and will depress house prices.

The last Tory MP both opposed the project and then resigned as a minister because of it. The candidate this time was committed to it.

The Lib Dems, who fought the 2019 general election supporting HS2, managed to convey an air of being against the project.

Lingering

Possible planning changes that would allow more house building on rural land were also very unpopular.

More generally there was a wave of disgruntled anger at Johnson. Chesham and Amersham backed Remain in 2016 and perhaps the result was part of lingering resentment over the issue.

Meanwhile, the Labour support collapsed to produce the party's worst ever result in a by-election.

The 622 votes recorded by Natasa Pantelic is embarrassingly rumoured to be about the same as the number of Labour members in the constituency. Nobody should be cheering

a Lib Dem win. It was a victory for the party that enabled the decade of austerity after 2010 by joining a coalition with the Tories.

At the last general election, the Lib Dems were for more restrictive spending than the Tories proposed. And they were prepared to override the Brexit vote without even holding another referendum.

This seat is hardly a barometer of working class feeling. It is 531 of 533 in the rank by deprivation of English constituencies.

Contradictory

Many Lib Dem by-election wins are the result of them channelling highly contradictory resentments at governments. They rarely have any lasting effect.

But they do feed the calls for Labour to do a deal with other parties so there is just one candidate to oppose the Tories.

For writer Paul Mason the slump in the Labour vote is a sign the "Progressive Alliance is already happening, whether the Labour bureaucracy likes it or not".

Such an alliance would strengthen even further the hold of pro-business politics in Labour.

Nothing else would be acceptable to the Lib Dems—and neither would be any sort of leftist as prime minister.

More importantly it takes politics away from forums of trade union battles and struggles outside of parliament.

Instead what matters is pacts between elites to scheme a way to office.

Labour is already in thrall to pro-capitalist ideas. Deals with the Lib Dems would accelerate the process.

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT leader Ed Davey says only his party can beat the Tories in the south after the Chesham and Amersham by-election last week

Batley and Spen by-election could spell disaster for Starmer

THE LABOUR Party is in trouble in the Batley and Spen by-election—and it deserves to be.

Labour has held the seat in West Yorkshire for 24 years. Its candidate, Kim Leadbeater, is the sister of Jo Cox who was the MP for the constituency until she was murdered by a far right supporter in 2016.

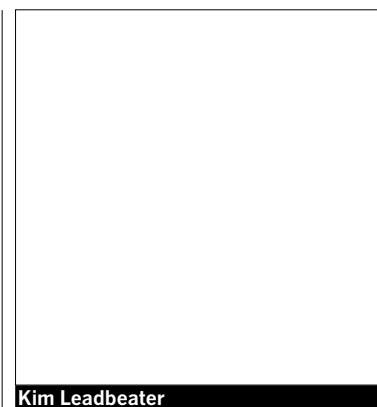
Much of the press coverage says that Labour could lose simply because it has alienated Muslim voters. That is a factor but it's far from the whole story.

Mary, a Unison union member in local government, told Socialist Worker, "I campaigned enthusiastically for Labour because of Jeremy Corbyn in 2017 and 2019.

"I won't campaign now because I think Starmer is useless.

"I don't know what the point of Labour is anymore, what's its aim? That not some slur on Starmer, I genuinely haven't a clue what vision he has for places like Batley or Dewsbury.

"And Kim Leadbeater I'm sure is a nice woman, but she only rejoined the party a few weeks ago and she campaigns as if she is



Kim Leadbeater

standing for the council. It's so low level."

Leadbeater's early leaflet had a hugely uninspiring five pledges. Number one was "More police to fight crime and anti-social behaviour".

Others were "better roads", "cleaner streets", "revitalised town centres" and "good jobs for local people".

This is particularly ineffective because the council, responsible for such local matters, is run by Labour. Sensing that the campaign

was faltering, Leadbeater then released a very carefully phrased leaflet about Palestine, Kashmir and Islamophobia.

It called for a "two state solution" in Palestine, self-determination for Kashmir and action against Islamophobia.

Batley resident Rayan told Socialist Worker, "When someone supposedly discovers their principles half way through an election I smell something wrong."

The alienation of some Muslims will be used as a cover if Labour loses. Yet the crisis goes much further.

It is about Labour's inability to offer working class people a way forward. That is why Boris Johnson and the Tories not only survive but have hopes of winning more seats.

Coming after the Labour defeat in Hartlepool, losing Batley and Spen will be another blow to Starmer. But it won't mean a move left from Labour. The party's right will redouble their calls for even more action against the Labour left and for "progressive pacts" with Liberal Democrats and Greens.

Muslims say Starmer takes their votes for granted

Socialist Worker spoke to Muslims in Batley and Spen who normally back Labour about why they feel let down by Keir Starmer's leadership

LAST WEEK five local Muslim organisations released an open letter to Keir Starmer.

It said that "after decades of supporting Labour, knocking on doors, organising voter turnout drives and so much more, we are now in serious doubt over whether we can continue with our support."

"Unfortunately, it seems that while we have been proud to support the Labour Party, for a long time the Labour Party has not been proud of our support. Put simply, our votes and voices have been taken for granted."

It added that many issues facing Muslims were similar to those faced

by working class people across Britain.

But it said there were, "concerns regarding the rising tide of Islamophobia, the racism inherent in the Prevent duty as well as ongoing international crises in Palestine, Kashmir, Xinjiang and beyond."

Zahida, who lives in the Mount Pleasant area of Batley, told Socialist Worker, "We have appealed to Labour to come out and be clear over Palestine and other issues. But they are clearly not with us."

"The way the issue of fake antisemitism was used to undermine support for Palestine is very fresh in our memories."

She added, "We know that Keir Starmer will support Israel, so I cannot vote for his candidate. And it's not just these issues."

"Where are the policies for our children to have a future after the pandemic? I am lucky I have a secure job, but many do not and the coronavirus has hurt us a lot."

Muslims have been a core Labour voters and members for decades

An alternative to Labour?

MUSLIMS SAY they feel torn between their hatred of Boris Johnson and their anger with Labour.

Manzoor said, "I may vote Labour just because I have seen what this government has done."

"It has continued to make Islamophobia part of British culture. I want to hurt Johnson."

"But Labour is so bad, perhaps I will not vote at all."

Several people said they thought former left wing MP George Galloway would grab a significant vote.

Abid told Socialist Worker, "I am going for Galloway. We know that he has been on the side of Muslims for decades and was the best MP over the Iraq War."

Galloway is campaigning on his long-term anti-imperialism and support for the Palestinians. He also says that a vote for him will make sure Labour loses and Starmer is forced out.

But this is combined with a poisonous "anti-woke" agenda which serves to reinforce divisions.

Witchhunt would put many off

SOME ARE trying to suggest that the reason why Muslims may not want to vote Labour any more is because they are sympathetic to antisemitism.

According to the Mail on Sunday columnist Dan Hodges, a Labour aide told him the party

was "haemorrhaging votes among Muslim voters."

"And the reason for that is what Keir has been doing on antisemitism."

Hodges added that the aide told him he'd challenged Jeremy Corbyn over antisemitism but there had been a

"backlash among certain sections of the community."

Muslims are right to distrust Starmer.

Some on the right may use this to say most Muslims, who support Palestine, don't care about antisemitism.

This is far from the truth.

Socialist Worker WHAT WE THINK

ANTI RACISM ISN'T TO BLAME FOR TORY FAILURES

THEORIES have discovered the terrible injustices faced by working class children. And they are very angry about them.

Or at least they are pretending to be, to fuel a different agenda.

Rich people who don't send their children to state schools are trying a deeply cynical manoeuvre.

The Education Select Committee's new report says poorer white children have been "let down and neglected".

But the focus is not on the class barriers that hold back all working class people, black and white.

Instead the aim is to set one group of working class people against another.

The committee chair, Tory Robert Halfon, accused the government of "muddled thinking" by failing to support disadvantaged white pupils.

He says it is a "major social injustice" and "scandal" that no attention has been paid to how white pupils on free school meals underachieve compared to black pupils.

And he claims theories of "white privilege" in education are likely to "promote disharmony".

There is very little evidence

that "white privilege" is taught in schools or dominates educational thinking.

It's a classic effort to hide who is responsible for people being "let down and neglected". It's not new, because similar claims have come from both Tory and Labour politicians before.

It says white children do badly because some black children are doing better. It wants to deflect people's anger from funding cuts, a crushingly narrow curriculum and the obsession with exams.

This hypocritical attack has to be confronted with united class anger and anti-racism.

The whole concept of the "white working class" is fake. The

“There is very little evidence that “white privilege” is taught in schools

working class is black, Asian and white. And it is oppressed and exploited by the elite.

The key dynamic is not the slightly different experiences of sections of the working class. It's the difference between the experience of children of the rich and those of the working class.

Children who are on free school meals do worse than those who are not eligible for them. Does that mean the slightly better off are the enemies of the poorest? Not at all, their interests are in winning an education system—and a society—which enriches them both.

Theories of "white privilege" are right to point to racism in society. But they don't identify the system that produces it.

Fighting racism is in the interest of all working class people, black and white. It is a necessary part of uniting workers against the rich.

Only a united resistance can overturn a racist, unequal system.

The class who went to Eton and other private schools think workers are stupid and can easily be fooled.

We should show them we will not accept this outrageous attempt to divide us.

BOMB INQUIRY FALLS SHORT

WHO COULD have stopped the Manchester Arena bombing in 2017? According to the official inquiry, it was two low paid teenage stewards. Sir John Saunders, chair of the public inquiry into the bombing, said there were "serious shortcomings" and missed opportunities to prevent the attack.

These included a "lack of training" for two stewards, aged 18 and 19 at the time and part of a casual, minimum wage workforce, who had noticed the bomber Salman Abedi. Saunders said he

wasn't looking for "scapegoats." But his inquiry never looked at why the bombing happened in the first place.

That would have meant asking questions about why someone of Libyan descent might feel so angry at Britain that he wanted to blow up a stadium.

It might have looked at Britain's role in fuelling the civil war that has torn Libya apart. It might have highlighted how British spy agencies MI5 and MI6 trained and tortured fighters against Muammar

Gaddafi's previous regime. It might have raised the uncomfortable fact that Abedi's brother, Hashem, was convicted over the bombing after himself being tortured with Britain's complicity.

Any serious inquiry into what caused the bombing would have to confront Britain's role in fuelling war in the Middle East. Instead it looked at security "failings" in Manchester—and concluded that stewards should be given more confidence to confront Muslims wearing backpacks.

Breakfast in



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ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



Covid has stirred up the labour market

THE GENERAL agitation about inflation continues among the bosses. In May the rate of inflation bumped up again in both the United States and Britain. The big worry remains about wages, because if they started rising significantly this would squeeze profits across the board.

The bosses would react by increasing prices, workers might demand higher pay, and in this way a 1970s wage-price spiral could develop.

Chris Harman, a former editor of Socialist Worker, showed at the time that wage rises don't actually cause inflation. But many ruling class commentators—for instance ex-IMF chief economist Olivier Blanchard—believe they do.

These fears are fed by the historical evidence of what happens after pandemics. According to the Economist, "Some research suggests that workers in fact do better in the aftermath of pandemics.

"A paper published last year by the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco finds that real wages tend to rise. In some cases this is through a macabre mechanism—the disease culls workers, leaving survivors in a stronger bargaining position."

Happily, horrific though the Covid-19 death toll is, it's nowhere comparable to the bubonic plague in the 1340s, which killed a third of the European population.

Sarah O'Connor, the Financial Times's employment columnist, quotes the Statute of Labourers 1351. "Some, seeing the straights of the masters and the scarcity of servants, are not willing to serve unless they receive excessive wages."

There are some signs of rising wages. In the US the pay of non-supervisory workers rose in May at an annual rate of nearly seven percent. And there are plentiful stories about labour shortages, especially in the hospitality industry.

O'Connor is sceptical. She points out that more than half of recent pay awards were lower than those received by the same groups of workers a year ago. Most public sector workers have had their wages frozen.

As for the labour shortages, O'Connor says, "Some potential workers are still nervous about the virus (not unreasonably—chefs are among the 10 occupations with relatively high male death rates from Covid-19).

"Others fear they could be furloughed or made redundant again if there is another lockdown.

"Workers from abroad who went home to be with their families might worry about coming back, only to be stranded on the wrong side of a border from their loved ones.

Risks

"People are weighing these risks against the potential rewards—median pay in hospitality is lower than any other sector, at just £8.64 in 2019, and about a fifth of workers are on zero-hours contracts."

In hospitality and leisure, employers laid off a fifth of workers despite the furlough scheme.

There are shortages in these sectors everywhere. Los Angeles Magazine quotes "a 22-year-old student who worked at a resort restaurant for three years.

"He was initially furloughed, then let go after providing his job with a doctor's note saying he wasn't fit to return to work when the restaurant reopened.

Since then, he started attending the University of California Los Angeles and took an internship that he says pays more than what he was making."

The student said, "It's not that nobody wants to work like the media is making it out to be, we just know our worth.

"Starvation wages for a difficult job with little to no benefits, terrible management, horrible hours, working every single holiday, as well as a complete disregard for the individual and their health, is not where anybody wants to be working. It was a blessing in disguise for nearly everybody who got let go."

Rather than a great price explosion, the uptick in inflation looks like the result of temporary disruptions in particular sectors caused by the pandemic.

One example is the shortage of computer chips, which has slowed auto production and pushed up used car prices.

These are what the economist Paul Krugman calls "transitory shocks".

The same disruptions—and the furloughs and other job subsidies—have widened the options for workers in sectors notorious for low pay such as hospitality. Good luck to them if they start demanding "excessive"—decent—wages.

Lining up behind Turner is no win for left in Unite union

by ISABEL RINGROSE

THE UNITE union general secretary election took a new turn last Friday when candidate Howard Beckett announced he was standing down from the race.

As the ballot papers were about to be printed, Beckett said he would endorse fellow candidate Steve Turner.

In a joint statement, Turner and Beckett said developing "the unity of the left in our union" is something to be proud of. Turner added he appreciates Beckett's decision to stand aside.

"As general secretary two of the most important people in his team will be Howard Beckett and Sharon Graham and the structures of Unite would reflect this," the statement said.

This is clearly meant to put pressure on Graham to also stand aside. Rightly she has refused to do so.

Turner represents a continuation of the policies and direction that Unite has followed in recent years. Many members want a change.

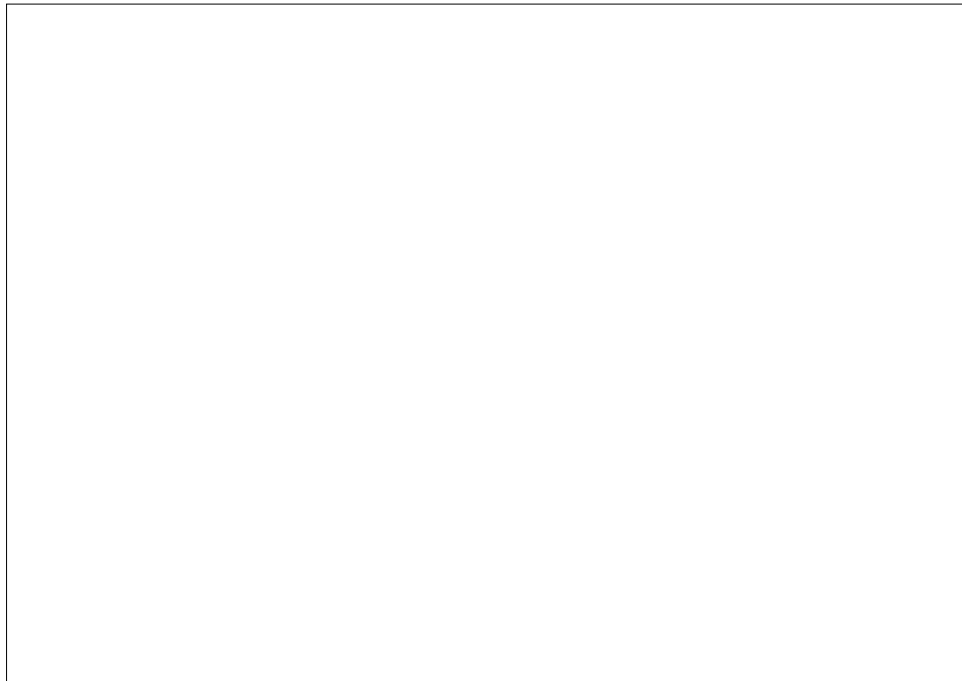
Danger

The danger is that unless it coheres around a left candidate then it will be captured by Labour right-winger Gerard Coyne.

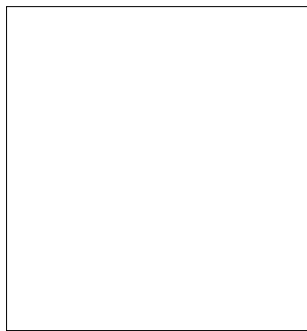
Socialist Worker supports Graham, who is running a campaign calling for a return to organisation centred on the workplace.

Arguments took place between Turner, Graham and Beckett over a "left-unity candidate".

But lining up behind Turner is not the way to win an election for the left. It would be



SHARON GRAHAM (above) has so far refused to step aside for continuity candidate Steve Turner (below)



an early step backwards in the battles to come with the Tories and bosses during and after the pandemic.

As the @UniteSharon Twitter account says, "This isn't the time to be passive or batten down the hatches. When we organise we win—protecting jobs and improving pay and conditions."

Coyne has now turned to red baiting. He said,

"There are now two hard-left candidates still in the Unite election, one backed by the Communist Party (Steve Turner) and one backed by the Socialist Workers Party and Militant (Sharon Graham)."

We aren't ashamed of our support, and nor should anyone else be.

Defeating Coyne—a supporter of Labour leader Keir Starmer, and who would drag Unite further right—is important. But Turner offers no radical opposition.

Beckett and Turner say they will now "both work to implement a blended manifesto, taking the best ideas from both candidates."

And Graham is showing no signs of shifting after

Beckett's announcement. Her support is also growing within the rank and file.

Over the weekend the Unite Construction Rank and File endorsed Graham's campaign. She has also won backing from leading stewards involved in recent strikes such as at Thurrock council.

"The announcement of the Turner/Beckett ticket, along with the Gerard Coyne candidacy, now completes the Westminster Brigade," Graham wrote.

"I am the workplace candidate and will be standing to ensure the voice of Unite members is heard."

Beckett's folding into Turner's campaign shows that the real alternative to Coyne is Graham.

Crunch coming at the JDE fire and rehire battle

WORKERS AT the JDE coffee plant in Banbury, Oxfordshire, struck last Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday.

They are fighting against their bosses' plans to fire and rehire them with worse terms and conditions, with some facing losses in excess of £10,000 a year.

The 291 workers have had notice of termination of their current contract and are under pressure to sign up to the new terms before the end of August.

So far the majority of workers have stood up to

the bullying tactics.

They had a further three days of strikes planned for Thursday and Sunday this week and Wednesday next week.

Coffee production is completely halted at the factory on strike days.

The Unite union organised a demonstration at the factory gates on Monday of last week with Barry Gardiner MP to launch his parliamentary bill to outlaw fire and rehire.

A law against fire and rehire would be welcome. But Gardiner's bill isn't

due for a second reading until October—too late for the JDE strikers.

It is also a huge gamble to hope that 86 Tory MPs will back Gardiner's bill.

The strikers' real strength is their ability to hit JDE's profits.

As the clock ticks down their best option is to escalate to indefinite action and build links with other workers to back their fight. **Ian Mckendrick**

Donations to branch SE6228. Sort code 60-83-01 a/c number 33200242, name 5/614. Send messages of support to @Banbury3001 on Twitter

Defiant on the picket line

PICTURE: JULIE SIMMONS

Crisis intensifies within the DUP

by SIMON BASKETTER

THE DEMOCRATIC Unionist Party (DUP) is about to select its third leader this year. Which is a lot for a party steadfastly against change.

The DUP is in a mess as former leader Arlene Foster resigned after an internal heave against her. Then her successor, Edwin Poots, followed suit after just three weeks in the position.

It was prompted by his decision to press ahead with reconstituting the Stormont Northern Ireland assembly executive alongside Sinn Féin.

A significant majority of his MPs and MLAs were vociferously opposed to the move.

The most likely successor is now Jeffrey Donaldson. He has promised to quit as a Westminster MP to return to the assembly and take up the role of first minister.

The specific cause for bother was supposedly an Irish Language Act.

Opposition to giving rights to people to speak Irish was what saw the DUP bring the executive down last time. And the prospect of it coming back did for Poots.

The DUP's Sammy Wilson shamefully refers to Irish as a "leprechaun language".

The current—but not for long first minister—Paul Givan when he was DUP communities minister slashed funding for the Irish language in 2016.

It was a rather blatant attempt to distract from a scandal where businesses could earn more money the more fuel they burned.

The ongoing and persistent nature of the crisis at Stormont is rooted in its creation. The Good Friday peace settlement is not designed to resolve issues but to manage them.

JEFFREY DONALDSON is expected to be the next DUP leader, the third this year

Whenever the Unionists are caught with their hands in the till they play the sectarian card.

It is no coincidence that an organisation founded on religious bigotry moves even further right while pouring fuel on real fires of sectarianism.

Nonetheless everyone is keen to implement the agreements and get the local parliament running again.

However as always, Britain has made things worse.

The Northern Ireland Protocol

MORE ONLINE

● DUP haters gonna hate bit.ly/northhaters

● A series of articles on the partition of Ireland. bit.ly/SWPartition100



was a last minute compromise to get Brexit through. It effectively creates a trade border down the Irish Sea.

But it allows free trade between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic.

This is an ideological threat to Unionism but one they are unable to deal with. They are pulled between a determination to whip up sectarianism to hold onto their shaky political base and the need to be in charge of the union.

The Loyalist Communities Council, an umbrella group for Loyalist paramilitary groups, issued a statement on Friday that urged the DUP to end "concessions" to Sinn Féin.

More electoral minded reactionaries in Traditional Unionist Voice are trying to mobilise to capitalise on the DUP's divisions.

There is potential for violent political rhetoric turning to reality as the crisis ridden unionists battle it out.

Oppose Tommy Robinson's mobilisation in Batley and Spen

FASCIST TOMMY Robinson is planning to demonstrate in Batley and Spen this Saturday to support far right candidates in the upcoming by-election.

Anti-fascists and anti-racists must be there to kick Robinson back into the pit he's crawling out from.

He has been trying to make a comeback since failing to be elected as a MEP. He won a humiliating 2.2 percent of the vote in north west England in 2019.

He was met by Stand Up To Racism activists wherever he attempted to campaign.

he threat of Robinson's reappearance must be taken seriously.

Batley and Spen must not be an opportunity for Robinson and his followers to gain confidence.

The by-election in Batley and Spen is set for 1 July (see pages 4 and 5). Among the 16 candidates

are two fascists, and several far right figures.

They are hoping to build on the back of the Tories' stirring up of racism.

Anne Marie Waters is running for the fascist, For Britain. And Jayda Fransen, former acting leader of Britain First and current leader of the British Freedom Party, is also running.

Fransen stood against Scottish first minister Nicola Sturgeon in Glasgow Southside last month gaining just 46 votes.

However big their electoral defeats have been, they cannot be allowed to rally unopposed.

Batley and Spen is the seat that Labour MP Jo Cox held before she was murdered by Nazi Thomas Mair who shouted "Britain first" as he killed her.

It has also been at the centre of arguments around Islamophobia



STAND UP To Racism opposed Robinson before

PICTURE: MARK RAMSAY/FICKR

after an offensive cartoon of the prophet Mohammed was shown at a school.

Candidates such as Waters and Fransen will try to ramp up attacks on Muslims. Fransen was imprisoned in 2018 for three charges of religiously aggravated harassment.

Others standing are the English Democrats and the anti-vax Heritage Party.

Jack Thomson is running for Ukip. He says his interest "grew a lot when Tommy Robinson became involved with the party."

"I had watched many of Tommy's videos and he too was a

man of principle and his incredible devotion to this day cannot be matched by anyone else," he says.

This shows the effect that fascists like Robinson can have when they are given a platform.

But at a time where there is little parliamentary opposition to the Tories' culture wars, protesters must be out on the streets to push back against fascists.

Local Stand Up To Racism groups in Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield, are organising a counter-protest to Robinson's planned appearance.

Anti-racists have pushed Robinson and his nasty thugs off the streets before.

We must do it again.

Isabel Ringrose

Stand Up To Racism protest, Saturday 26 June 12 noon-6pm, Batley Town Hall, Market Square



US drives up pressure on Iran after election

Iran's presidential election has the US and Israel rallying their allies in the Middle East, reports Nick Clark

THE US and its warmonger ally Israel want to use the results of a presidential election in Iran to stamp their control on the Middle East.

Conservative judge Ebrahim Raisi was elected president on Friday of last week.

The US and its allies have seized on the election result, pointing to Raisi's bloody history of repression.

Raisi was part of a committee of judges who sent thousands of opponents of the regime to their deaths in 1988.

These included members of the US-backed Mujahideen-e Khalq—an armed group which attacked Iran—but also members of left wing organisations.

The turnout in the election—between 43 and 48 percent—was the lowest in the history of Iran's Islamic Republic, which was established in 1979.

At least 4 million people spoiled their ballot papers rather than vote for any of the approved candidates.

It's a reflection of dissatisfaction among ordinary people with all of Iran's ruling elites.

A series of crises have eroded trust and support for Iran's rulers.

These include economic crises and rising prices, fuelled by sanctions imposed on Iran by the West but also by corruption, austerity and free market reforms.

Outbreaks

Iran's government also struggled to contain coronavirus outbreaks in the early months of the pandemic. And there was widespread anger early in 2020 after the state shot down a civilian airliner then lied about it.

Recent waves of mass protests against the government have been met with brutal repression.

Following the result, a spokesperson from the US state department said, "Iranians were denied their right to choose their own leaders in a free and fair electoral process."

And Israel's right wing prime

BACK STORY

There have been big waves of revolt in Iran in recent years

● Protests spread across Iran in December 2017 against poverty and corruption

● There were more protests in provincial towns and cities in November 2019 over fuel prices

● And there were big protests in December 2020 after the regime shot down a passenger plane

● The US claims to back the protests—but there's no sign the protesters back the US

minister Naftali Bennett branded Iran a "regime of hangmen."

They also say Iran's election process—where candidates have to be approved by the unelected Guardian Council of clerics—denied Iranians a real choice.

They are hypocrites. The US and Israel support and cooperate with many equally brutal regimes in the Middle East, including dictatorships with far less democracy than Iran.

Their real problem is that Raisi is a "hardliner". He is more opposed to making deals with the West than "reformists", such as previous president Hassan Rouhani.

Revive

Currently the US is trying to revive a deal that allows it to limit Iran's development of nuclear technology in return for ending sanctions. But Israel is opposed to the deal.

The US is also trying to strengthen military alliances against Iran among its allies in the Middle East. So it is no friend of ordinary Iranian people.

Raisi received nearly 18 million votes—more than the 16 million he got in the 2017 presidential election. It's a sign that many Iranians still support confronting the US.

They know the US is responsible for decades of coups, dictatorships and wars that have inflicted suffering on ordinary people.

IRANIAN PRESIDENTIAL election winner Ebrahim Raisi

FRANCE

Poor result for Nazis—but not over yet

JUST ONE in three potential voters took part in the first round of regional elections across France last Sunday.

It is a record abstention rate and underlines that no political force has wide support.

President Emmanuel Macron's LREM party won only around 11 percent of the vote nationally.

Fascist Marine Le Pen's National Rally (RN) had hoped to lead in as many as six of France's 13 regions.

Instead, the party topped just one contest, in the southern Provence-Alpes-Cotes d'Azur region. There it secured only a few points lead in a race it had

expected to run away with.

With a projected national vote share of around 19 percent, support for the RN was nine points lower than in the last regional polls in 2015. Large anti-racist demonstrations recently will have helped. But the fascist danger has not disappeared.

The mainstream right took nearly 30 percent of the vote. And the Labour-like Socialist Party (PS) recovered from its recent very low figures to 16.5 percent.

Candidates that win more than 10 percent of votes in the first round can stand in the second round, set for this Sunday.

Nazi Le Pen won't be happy

BRAZIL

Huge protests against president Bolsonaro

HUNDREDS OF thousands of protesters took to the streets of Brazil as the country's Covid-19 death toll surpassed 500,000 last week.

Some 750,000 joined marches that were larger than the ones on 29 May. Demonstrations took place in at least 22 of Brazil's 26 states.

They explicitly condemned Brazil's far right president Jair

Bolsonaro for his handling of the virus.

The protesters also railed against the fact that currently only 11 percent of Brazilians have received a vaccine.

Protesters generalised to all of Bolsonaro's policies that hit working class people and the poor.

In Rio de Janeiro protesters held signs that read "Get out Bolsonaro. Government of hunger

and unemployment" and "500,000 deaths. It's his fault."

Bolsonaro is currently in trouble.

He and his government are facing an official congressional investigation into their handling of coronavirus.

And in a poll conducted last month only 24 percent of Brazilians think his administration is "good" or "great".

Labour's move right on borders

LABOUR IS using the rising number of Covid-19 cases to adopt a much more right wing position over immigration and asylum.

In a coordinated mood last week, Labour framed the central problem around the maintenance of coronavirus restrictions as people entering Britain from abroad.

Shadow home secretary Nick Thomas-Symonds published a "dossier" entitled "Losing Control—A Story Of Conservative Covid Border Failure".

Deputy leader Angela Rayner then tweeted that Labour was for "keeping the British people safe" while the Tories dangerously left open the borders.

It was followed up by a parliamentary motion that demanded blocking travel from more countries and an international vaccine passport.

With vast areas of the Global South unvaccinated that means an automatic block on travel for billions of people.

Keir Starmer went on LBC radio to say "Freedom Day" on 21 June had been postponed by the government's "pathetic" border policy.

Of course there are valid questions about quarantine and testing.

But Labour is adopting themes of the right and far right about harder borders and keeping out "diseased foreigners".

It is disgustingly racist and the Tories will always be able to go further.

Sarah Buchanan
West London



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

Scotland failing on climate target as Cop26 approaches

SCOTLAND HAS been unable to meet its climate change target for the third year in a row.

That's particularly outrageous as Glasgow will host this year's UN climate conference in November.

The main perpetrator responsible for failing to meet reduced emission targets comes from the domestic transport sector propped up by the fossil fuel industry.

However, with more solutions that incorporate renewable energy generation into the national grid, some emissions have been chipped away at.

In addition, some natural mechanisms to sequester and reduce carbon are being depleted at the same time.

Forests and peat lands that act

as carbon sinks, are degrading, cut down or transformed for land use such as agriculture—the third highest emitter.

Policies to cut emissions must be transformative.

They have to work at a systematic level whereby serious infrastructure investment can facilitate the switch to lower emitting transport methods.

At the moment highly individualised options such as purchasing an electric vehicle or bicycle are no match for the insatiable thirst for North Sea oil.

Lofty rhetoric on decarbonising, will be doubled down come November.

The recent G7 summit displayed the ploys of Western nations engaging in further

confrontational geopolitics and undermining action on the climate change they are disproportionately responsible for.

Net zero pledges within this atmosphere will not be met in Scotland and beyond if people's interests are not at the centre of the discussion.

Divesting from destructive energy intensive sectors that fuel the war machine must be part of the green recovery.

When we protest at Cop26 in November we will highlight predominantly global questions.

But we should also remember that Scotland's politicians are failing to take the urgent action that is required.

Daniel Mwangi
Glasgow

How can we outlaw the fire and rehire attacks?

I HAVE been following the strikes and protests against employers' use of fire and rehire.

This is where people have the "choice" of accepting a worse contract or being sacked.

Socialist Worker is right to point out this spreading practice and to demand opposition to it.

If it becomes common then we face a severe squeeze on living standards.

There have been many big battles such as at British Gas, Go North West in Manchester and

now at JDE Coffee in Oxfordshire.

But there have been very few wins.

I wonder if the laws against trade union action are now so strong that nasty, determined employers can always win.

Should we not be putting more emphasis into seeking to achieve a change the law to outlaw fire and rehire?

It would be better if strikes could overcome employers. But that doesn't seem likely.

Roger Oliver
Manchester

Step up the solidarity with Colombia

OVER A month since it began the violence against protesters in Colombia continues. The number of "disappearances" is now in the hundreds alongside increased deaths and assaults.

The protests give the rest of the world a glaring look into the living standards of the working class and corruption in the Colombian state.

Despite this revelation of the truth there has been a severe lack of interest from the world's media.

This is not new as the rest of the world is usually disengaged from Latin American politics. This is

Colombians have risen up

exactly how the Colombian government would like to keep it. It is manipulating its own media to portray protestors as "terrorists" when in reality they are

fighting to be treated as humans and for equality.

This is why supporting the Colombian cause is imperative.

Both the working class and indigenous people have come together against corruption. A revolutionary fire has been lit.

And after over a month of protests we can learn a lot from the sustained struggle of Colombians.

They need our support more than ever, our solidarity. Make the effort to understand and tell their stories when the media won't. #SOSColombia.

Francesca Yepes
South London

Just a thought...

Why no ban on evictions?

THE TORIES will always look after their friends.

The government has announced it will extend the ban on evictions from commercial buildings until 2022.

But from the start of June it halted the eviction ban for tenants.

There are hundreds of thousands of renters in arrears and open to eviction and homelessness. They don't get the same level of support as businesses.

Sally Blanchard
by Facebook

Keir Starmer's rotten slogan

KEIR STARMER has chosen "Stronger Together" to brand his re-write of policies that will tear up Jeremy Corbyn's legacy.

Its bold ideas include "public services that work from the start". Does anyone support "public services that don't work from the start"?

"Stronger Together" was also the slogan of Hillary Clinton's failed presidential bid.

How apt that Starmer has raided the presentational cupboard of someone who was so in with the elites that they couldn't beat Donald Trump.

Marie Geordiagis
North London

Don't go back to how it was

I AM never going back to commuting.

I know I am lucky to be able to work from home. But so can many others.

Workers, tell the boss you are not going back to how it was. Embrace a fuller life where you don't spend two hours a day going back and forth to work.

It should be at the front of union demands.

Alan Brown
Birmingham

Remember Daniel Morgan

WE MUST not let the revelations about police corruption and the Daniel Morgan murder be ignored.

The least his family—and the rest of us—deserve is that this terrible series of events leads to thorough change.

Mike Hardcastle
Leeds

WHY THE COPS ARE CORRUPT TO THE CORE

The inquiry into the investigations into the murder of Daniel Morgan declared last week that the Metropolitan Police is ‘institutionally corrupt’. **Simon Basketter** explains why fraud is built into the police

ONE OF many internal investigations into Metropolitan Police corruption was called **Operation Othona** in 1993. Most of its files were shredded in 2003, except a single A4 ring binder.

The file was called “The Dark Side of the Moon—everyone knows it is there but not many can see it”.

It listed examples of corruption, including unauthorised police computer checks, providing criminals with details of police operations and documents, “losing” evidence, offering protection from arrest and prosecution, and conspiring with criminals and informants in criminality.

It said, “Paranoia about what might be revealed if corruption was investigated with vigour is running high in some very powerful and influential circles.”

Othona was an investigation of, among other things, corruption among south London cops. Around the time of Daniel Morgan’s murder, gangsters there paid detectives to report on police operations and then lose or weaken evidence.

Drugs and goods seized from informers were being handed back for them to sell and share the proceeds.

Detectives carried a “First Aid kit”. It contained a balaclava, drugs and a gun. It was used to plant evidence.

So it is not surprising that the inquiry into the 1987 murder of Daniel Morgan slammed the police for “institutional corruption”.

The panel said it had not found enough evidence to definitely prove police involvement in Morgan’s murder. But it did find all police inquiries into the murder were flawed or compromised by corruption.

Successive police investigations were, as one senior officer put it, “pathetic”. A raft of connected prosecutions failed. The police admitted corruption in the first investigation. But as the panel pointed out, they have never said what that corruption was.

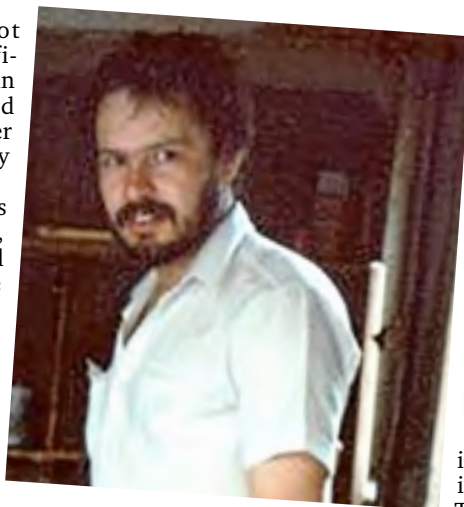
Suspects were warned of their impending arrest—the details were published in the Daily Mirror newspaper—giving them time to dispose of incriminating material.

Freemason

The crime scene was not properly secured. Suspects and witnesses were drinking buddies with cops and members of the same Freemason lodge who then took their statements. Eleven cops at least who investigated the case were masons.

Officers moonlighted as private investigators and “security” for crooks, and were passed “brown envelopes”. Obvious witnesses were not spoken to until months after the murder, once their memories and any clues they might provide had long gone cold.

No log “containing any coherent lines of enquiry” appeared to have been kept, or more likely went missing. Exhibit bags were left open and contaminated.



Daniel Morgan was murdered in south London in 1987. An inquiry into failed police investigations into his death last week declared the cops to be ‘institutionally corrupt’



Sensitive information was repeatedly leaked to the press.

When a murder prosecution was eventually brought it collapsed in 2011 amid catastrophic evidence disclosure failures and the flaws of a supergrass informants system.

The panel points out that policies and procedures relating to the use of informants still allow “scope for corrupt practices”.

Empty

After all that the cops promised to cooperate with the inquiry. The promise was empty. The panel found itself obstructed

at every turn. And further the institutional corruption consisted of dishonestly “concealing or denying failings, for the sake of the organisation’s public image”.

The panel said the corruption continues “to the present”.

For seven years the Met denied the panel access to evidence, and in particular to the “Holmes” computer system.

The officer primarily responsible for what the panel called disreputable delaying tactics was Cressida Dick, now boss of the Met.

The panel also found evidence of corrupt links between police officers and private investigators who were selling sensitive police information to the media.

The panel heard officers who tried to report wrongdoing were ostracised,

transferred to different units, encouraged to resign or faced disciplinary action.

When the cops tackle corruption, as the Morgan inquiry shows, it is to “protect the reputation of the force”.

Being “bent for themselves”—cops taking bribes from criminals to suppress evidence and skimming off profits from rackets—is supposedly frowned on. Though as the panel shows it is rife.

But being “bent for the job” is a different matter.

Paul Condon, head of the Met during most of the 1990s, coined the phrase “noble cause corruption”—the idea that some police justifiably “bend the rules” to get a conviction when they “knew” the accused was guilty, but had no proof.

Condon set up a secret anti-corruption squad known as the Untouchables. A number of senior officers—Andy Hayman, John Yates, Paul Stevens and Ian Blair—were in the squad.

All are criticised in the Morgan report (see right).

To find out about corruption they again needed informers – whether crooks or crooked cops. The bigger the investigation the bigger the informer—so-called supergrasses.

They tend to be offered a clean slate and in return offer enough information to make the deal worthwhile. They lied and fabricated, and the police encouraged them to do it.

The very method of supposedly stamping out corruption is itself corrupt. Institutionally so.



‘The commissioners of the Metropolitan Police from the past twenty or so years should be stripped of their titles and put in the dock’

Daniel Morgan’s son Dan
speaking to the inquiry

DAME CRESSIDA DICK

The Metropolitan Police commissioner was personally criticised and said to be among senior officers who placed “hurdles” in the way of the panel’s search for the truth. Her refusal to allow the team access to a crucial computer system with details of the investigation indicated the Met’s “lack of candour”.

DEPUTY ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER JOHN YATES

The panel said a report by John Yates into the case in 2006 “failed to confront the issue of corruption”. Yates’s inquiry “reflects a totally inappropriate mindset” within the force at the time. The panel added, “It ignores the endemic risk and existence of police corruption.”

After resigning during the hacking scandal he went on to advise the police in Bahrain.

LORD BLAIR OF BOUGHTON

In 2005 Blair, as commissioner, told the Metropolitan Police Authority that his force had tried “to the best of its abilities” to correct the problems deriving from the first murder inquiry. It had done nothing of the sort. The account “had the effect of overstating the extent of past efforts” to rectify problems.

LORD STEVENS OF KIRKWHELPINGTON

The former Met commissioner was criticised for his decision to retire and write a column in the News of the World. Stevens claimed not to know Southern Investigations was used to get police information, despite writing about it in his autobiography.

DAVE COOK

The former superintendent was criticised for coaching witnesses. That, in part, led to the collapse of the trial of murder suspects in 2011.

The News of the World put Cook and his wife Jacqui Hames, a former police officer, under surveillance probably at the request of the Sid Fillery, an ex-cop at the heart of the case.

According to the report Cook had been allowed to “operate outside many of the laws, policies and procedures which govern policing”

ANDY HAYMAN

Hayman ran two investigations into press phone hacking. This is the same officer who “chose to mislead the public” over the shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes.

The former counter-terrorism chief signed a contract with News International as a columnist for The Times. He wrote an article that argued phone hacking by the press wasn’t widespread.

Bribing and beating key to ‘results’

IN 1877, it was revealed a crook who took huge bets on horse races that never happened had bribed police.

The Criminal Investigation Department, CID—a body of professional detectives—was set up to eliminate corruption.

The opposite happened. In accepting bribes, suppressing evidence and giving advanced notice of raids, the behaviour of the new officers was to provide a blueprint for the behaviour of cops to the present day

The police live surrounded by crime. They have the best criminal contacts.

Despite having a computer system named Holmes they don’t solve crime through deduction.

Nor do they do it by chasing criminals shouting, “Stop thief.” Rather they use “intelligence” and by this they mean inside information.

Bribing, beating or blackmailing people to give them information about crimes is how most arrests happen. That means the day-to-day system of “crime fighting” is corrupt.

Police informers have crimes ignored or used against them. That in itself is a corrupting relationship.

It is also the basis for criminal cooperation.

The informants gain from their relationship with the police and the police gain from their relationships with the informants.

Colleagues are bound to silence out of loyalty, and the judicial system tends to believe everything cops say, even when they have been proven guilty.

Police are encouraged to break the law and lie as part of their job. There is a pressure to get results and cut corners to get convictions.

Bigotry

They are encouraged to act brutally towards those who challenge the system. That is why they act to reinforce and adopt the bigotry and prejudice of society—the cops secure a racist society, so they operate in an institutionally racist way.

The justice system reflects the society it protects. The system is inherently unjust, overwhelmingly favouring the rich against the poor and based on theft and corruption.

The strings are pulled by the rich and powerful, the forces of the state, and the media.

The accused are poor, without influence and power. That is why they end up framed, beaten or dead.

And the cops get away with it.



WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism.

In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women.

We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We oppose discrimination against disabled people including those who experience mental distress.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests.

We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7840 5602

Socialist Workers Party online meetings



The Socialist Workers Party is holding online meetings during the coronavirus crisis. This is to ensure that there can still be collective local discussion, organising and actions.

Most of the meetings will be held using the Zoom system. Download the Zoom app onto your phone or computer and just before the time given for your local meeting ask to "Join a meeting".

You can then enter the number printed on this page for the appropriate meeting. **The password for all meetings is 967537.**

Make sure you look at the SWP Facebook page facebook.com/SocialistWorkersParty for news of national online meetings and other updates.

Protesters celebrate outside the Stonewall Inn in New York in 1969

STONEWALL WAS A RIOT!

THE RADICAL ROOTS OF PRIDE

BIRMINGHAM
Wed 23 June, 7pm
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PROTESTERS FIGHT the hated Omon riot police in Belarus in 2020. Paluyan's *Courage* captures the excitement of the revolt

On the frontline in Belarus

Aliaksei Paluyan's documentary shot in Minsk during the anti-government protests captures the horror of living a life under tyranny, writes **Julia Ryder**

WHEN ALEXANDER Lukashenko rigged the Belarusian presidential election last summer, he expected to get away with it unscathed like so many times before.

Yet what followed, was the biggest rebellion in the history of the eastern European despot's regime.

A new documentary, *Courage*, tells the story of some of what happened.

Director Aliaksei Paluyan follows three members of the underground Free Belarus Theatre, Denis Tarasenko, Maryna Yakubovich and Pavel Haradnizky.

We meet them just as campaigning has begun in the presidential election in the summer of 2020.

Opposition forces are hoping liberal challenger Svetlana Tychanovskaya will unseat former Stalinist bureaucrat Lukashenko.

The documentary shows snapshots of daily life under the regime and the choices people have to make to resist its banal, bureaucratic control.

The directors of the Free Theatre, Nicolai Khalezin and Natalia Kaliada, were forced into exile almost a decade before the Belarusian revolt of 2020.

But activists sometimes manage to find ways to subvert the official censor. While the Free Theatre rehearses its *Dogs of Europe* play, Nicolai joins the rehearsals via Skype in London.

Here he continues to receive death threats from the regime.

Conversations

Paluyan's *Courage* has no narrator, leaving Denis, Maryna and Pavel to tell the story through their conversations and a few asides to the camera. There is something very powerful about this style.

But it means the pace at the beginning is—terribly—slow and assumes a lot of knowledge about the Belarusian revolt.

This begins to change as results from polling stations start coming in.

Crowds begin to fill the streets in response to reports of Tychanovskaya doing well, but are swiftly beaten up by the Omon riot police.

These dramatic scenes, which many Socialist Worker readers will have read or heard about, are captured by Paluyan.

As police violence escalates, Maryna and her partner debate what's better for their baby son.

The potential loss of his parents—or having the burden of fighting against the regime placed on a new generation?

But, rather than deterring protesters, the police violence politicises tens of thousands of people who hadn't come out onto the streets before.

Some of the most powerful sections of the documentary show queues of people—including many women who would be at the forefront of the revolt—outside police stations.

They shout at the cops and demand to know what's become of their relatives. Here we see first hand anger replacing fear.

In the days that followed, thousands of workers joined mass meetings and stoppages at dozens of workplaces in Minsk and in other towns and cities.

The workers' revolt was one of the things that made the Belarusian revolt so exciting—and was a glimpse of the power that could have forced out Lukashenko.

Courage, perhaps understandably for what it is, glides over the strikes.

And, you'll struggle to find a definitive political narrative of any sort in Paluyan's documentary.

Nevertheless, *Courage* does help show how rapidly in revolts ordinary people can be thrust onto a political stage normally reserved for their "betters".

Courage is on cinematic release from 1 July

Heartbreaking road movie where time is the enemy

FILM

SUPERNOVA

Written and directed by Harry Macqueen.
In cinemas from 9 July

HOW TO say goodbye to your loved one after you've discovered your mind is to be ravaged by early onset dementia?

Do you rage against the dying of the light or stoically accept your plight?

Can the solution of assisted suicide be anything but a devastating impact on family and loved ones or is this an

altruistic move that is the only rational solution for all concerned?

In *Supernova* Colin Firth (Sam) and Stanley Tucci (Tusker) play gay lovers in a long term relationship.

Together they embark upon a final road trip in a camper van that meanders through the autumnal beauty and melancholic shadows of the Lake District.

Stanley who suffers from early onset dementia is a novelist who intends to make a dignified and secret exit.

He is the more



Sam and Tusker in *Supernova*

humorous and sarcastic of the pairing, making a nice barbed comment about Thatcher, the Sat Nav voice and Section 28.

But the politics stops there, this is meant to be a final wave goodbye to Tusker's world.

Sam is a concert pianist making a comeback, on his way to play a recital at the journey's end.

Firth's performance is finely modulated as the empathetic partner who is struggling to make sense and cope with the heartbreaking scenario.

The effects of Tusker's

dementia gradually come to the surface.

Sam finding his once ebullient partner lost and disconsolate on a country lane, unable to perform the small function of putting on his shirt, the birthday speech he can't deliver, the novel he can't finish.

Supernova brings home Sam's tragic dilemma of caring for a partner who's running out of time.

As Tusker quips, "You're not supposed to mourn someone while they're still alive".

Stephen Philip

MUSIC

GANG OF FOUR, 77-81

Out now in all formats and streaming

GIVEN THE political intensity of the times its surely no accident that there is continued interest in the musical phenomenon that was "post-punk".

Many bands of the late 1970s genre tried to fuse the energy and aggression of punk, with politics directed against the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher.

But the best of them went further and asked us to think harder about the



Gang of Four

system we lived under, and the effect it had on us.

Leeds band Gang of Four was among the most articulate of the bunch.

Despite being touted as the "next big thing"—and playing support to some of the most popular post-punk outfits—their time never really came.

Perhaps the song titles and lyrics were to blame? Certainly, I never heard their song "Armalite Rifle" being played on daytime Radio One.

If you want to see what all the fuss was about, this collection is a good place to start.

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- 2 **Transgender Resistance**
Laura Miles
- 3 **A Rebel's Guide to George Orwell**
John Newsinger
- 4 **Rebellious Daughters of History**
Judy Cox
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A POST-Brexit trade war is currently raging where different sections of the ruling class are in conflict over how to proceed.

There have been times, similar to this, when arguments within the ruling class have led them to seek support from the working class.

But ultimately the bosses have chosen to stand together with their rivals and come together in an effort to hold down the working class.

This was true in the struggles over the Corn Laws—that were repealed 175 years ago.

The Corn Laws were introduced to stop the import of foreign corn in order to raise the price of British-grown corn.

Between 1815 and 1846, laws introduced tariffs and other trade restrictions on grains, such as wheat, barley and oats. This made corn too expensive to import.

Far from being just a dusty set of Victorian trade laws, the battles around the Corn Laws represented class tensions.

Similar tensions lie behind arguments around Britain's exit from the European Union.

WHO gets the best deals from competing trade laws is crucial for nations battling for control of markets.

The Corn Laws meant landowners saw their profits and power skyrocket. They made money from extortionate rents paid by tenant farmers for the lease of their land.

Meanwhile wages and the cost of living rose and forced factory owners to raise wages.

These factory owners who were part of a rising industrial class were reaping their wealth from production in factories. They wanted to scrap the Corn Laws to keep prices low.

This wasn't because they cared about the quality of life for ordinary people, but because they wanted to keep wages as low as possible.

Karl Marx wrote that these Free Traders were "the official representatives of modern English society."

"They represent the party of industrial capital striving to make available its social power as a political power as well, and to eradicate the last arrogant remnants of feudal society," he said.

"By Free Trade they mean the unfettered movement of capital, freed from all political, national and religious shackles."

At the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, corn prices decreased causing panic among farmers—many of whom were also Tory voters.

So the Tory government passed the Importation Act,

A MURAL celebrating the end of the Corn Laws

HOW THE CORN LAWS SPLIT THE RULING CLASS

It has been 175 years since the repeal of the Corn Laws. Isabel Ringrose explores how the bosses' arguments over trade can open the door for working class resistance

excluding the import of foreign corn and driving up the price of domestic corn.

Economists in favour of the laws worried about Britain relying on imported corn because lower prices were used by bosses to reduce wages and purchasing power.

In fact the resulting high price of corn dropped the domestic market for manufactured goods, as people spent most of their earnings on food rather than other commodities.

The working class and the poor weren't just bystanders as arguments raged at the

top of society. As prices rose, rioting followed. One account explains how "in London and Westminster riots ensued, and continued for several days."

It added, "At Bideford there were similar disturbances; at Bury, by the unemployed, to destroy machinery; at Ely, not suppressed without bloodshed, at Dundee, where owing to the high price of meal [crushed grains], upwards of 100 shops were plundered."

In August 1819 a 60,000-strong rally against poverty and hunger took place in St Peter's Field in Manchester. The authorities

killed at least 17 men, women and children were killed, with up to 700 wounded, in what became known as Peterloo.

By 1828 a new sliding scale was introduced in the latest Importation of Corn Act.

This sliding scale meant that buyers had more incentive to buy larger amounts of corn because the duty would decrease if they bought it bulk.

The Whig governments of 1830-4 and 1835-41 were challenged by members of the first working class movement, the Chartists, and the Anti Corn Law League.

League members were mainly middle class manufacturers, merchants, bankers and traders.

They wanted the Corn Laws to be repealed as part of a general removal of restrictions so that they could sell more goods both in Britain and overseas.

But they promised the passing of the Ten Hours Bill—restricting hours of work—to get workers on side, despite wanting to reduce wages to maximise profits.

Tory Robert Peel became prime minister in 1841. He had voted against repeal every year from 1837 to 1845.

By 1845, poor harvests and the Great Famine in Ireland changed the situation.

IRELAND EXPORTED food to Britain despite mass starvation—the price of food in Ireland was so high that the poor couldn't afford it—but it wasn't enough.

On 4 December 1845 it was announced in The Times newspaper that the government had decided to recall Parliament in January to repeal the Corn Laws.

Peel didn't believe he could bring the majority of his party to support him, so he resigned on 11 December.

But when the opposition Whig party failed to create a government, Peel returned soon after despite the majority of his party opposing his proposals.

On 27 January Peel said the Corn Laws would be abolished on 1 February 1849 after three years of gradual reduction of the tariff.

The third reading of the bill on 15 May saw MPs vote 327 to 299 in favour, with the House of Lords persuaded to pass it on 26 June.

Peel's Irish Coercion Bill was defeated the same night in retaliation—forcing him to resign.

Peel sacrificed his government. Reform was necessary in order to unite the ruling class.

The Whigs formed a government with the support of the rising industrial class. The Tories loyal to Peel later merged with the Whigs to form the Liberal Party. It would be 30 years before the Tories were back in government.

Following the abolition, farms in North America benefited from the development of cheaper shipping and the modernisation of agriculture.



Peel sacrificed his government in the face of unrest

Robert Peel

They could export vast quantities of cheap grain, as could the Russian Empire which had a large peasant population.

By 1877 the price of British corn averaged at 55 shillings (£2.75) a quarter, and by 1886 dropped to 31 shillings (£1.55).

Wheat-growing land fell by a million acres by 1885.

In the 1881 census the number of agricultural labourers fell by 92,250—and it saw an increase of 53,496 urban workers.

Rural rents fell and Britain's rich then threw themselves into becoming "the workshop of the world" during the Industrial Revolution.

During the battle to keep or abolish the Corn Laws, the landowners came into conflict with the rising industrial class.

Marx wrote, "The substantial foundation of the power of the Tories was the rent of land. The rent of land is regulated by the price of food."

"The repeal of the Corn Laws brought down the rent of land, and with the sinking rent broke down the real strength upon which the political power of the Tories reposed."

But for the industrial bourgeoisie it meant "lowering production costs, expansion of foreign trade, increase in profits, lessening of the main source of income and hence of power, of the landed aristocracy, enhancement of their own political power".

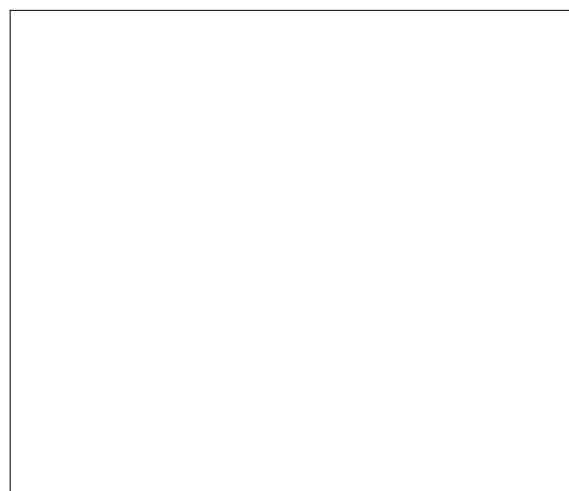
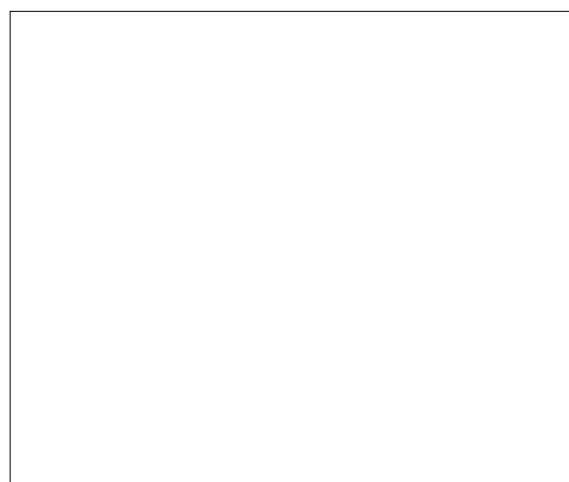
The threat of losing their power meant the landowners also turned to win the support of sections of the working class.

Marx commented that the landed aristocracy "resolved to resist the middle classes by espousing the cause and claims of the working men against their masters, and especially by rallying around their demands for the limitation of factory labour."

But the engagement of the working class in such battle could have seen the masses develop their own aims. Without a large peasantry, class conflict was clearer to see.

The industrial class wanted to avoid any reforms that could lead to major uprisings by the working class.

The threat of working people's power eventually meant the industrial capitalists compromised with the landed aristocracy, to create



A meeting of the Anti Corn Law League in 1846 (top) A membership card for the Anti Corn Law league (above)

a capitalist agriculture. They were more scared of the rising power of workers than the limitations and contradictions of compromising with political and economic rivals.

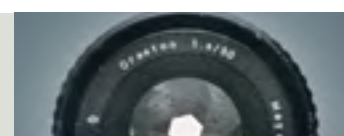
"If the aristocracy is their vanishing opponent the working class is their arising enemy", Marx wrote. "They prefer to compromise with the vanishing opponent rather than to strengthen the arising enemy, to whom the future belongs."

What the Corn Laws show is that behind arguments about tariffs and trade barriers are sharp class interests. It is possible for similar arguments to lead to intervention by working class people today.

At the rise of industrial capital, it wasn't clear which section of the capitalist class would be the dominant force.

But those that suffered—either through wage cuts or hunger—were the working classes.

It's workers who had, and still have, the ability to remove warring capitalists who make trade deals on international markets that benefit only the elite.



FOCUS ON IMPERIALISM

Biden tries to pull Russia into his battle with China

Presidents Putin and Biden met last week for a summit. Yuri Prasad investigates what the outcome means for imperialism

WHY WAS US president Joe Biden meeting Russian leader Vladimir Putin at a countryside retreat in Switzerland last week?

Official accounts say that the two discussed the recent wave of alleged Russian cyberattacks on US institutions.

On the agenda was also Russia's military build-up in Ukraine and the case of Russian dissident Alexei Navalny.

But the real reason why Biden arranged to meet Putin was not even an item for discussion at the summit—the US's amplifying tensions with China.

The ransomware attacks are certainly an irritation to Biden. Earlier this month the world's biggest meatpacker was allegedly targeted by Russian cyber criminals.

Largest

In May, the largest fuel pipeline in the US was attacked. These have stoked fear over disruption to food and fuel supplies.

The White House says that hacker assaults on the energy sector could potentially shut down the US power grid.

Biden is said to have laid down "red lines" on the issue. He told Putin that the US would retaliate in kind if the attacks were from Russia, and continued.

But on the two other items on the agenda—Ukraine and Navalny—Biden is fairly relaxed.

Since the meeting between the two leaders was announced earlier this year, Putin has withdrawn some of his troops on the border.

And though Navalny remains in prison, he is no longer on the brink of death.

But Biden's recent tour of Europe, including the G7 and Nato summits, had a specific purpose. It's to shore

up the US's allies for a tough approach to the economic and military growth of China.

Three days before the G7, the US announced it would approve a trade agreement with Taiwan. This was designed to provoke China, which lays claim to the territory.

A day later the US Senate passed a £176 billion package of legislation to combat China's technological growth.

All of this makes clear that Biden sees Russia as a relatively minor threat compared to China.

"I think that the reality of the Chinese relationship, Chinese influence and power, and the difficulty in aligning other countries in the world with the US on China means that we'd rather not have big problems on the Russian front," said Time magazine's Ian Bremmer.

But there are ways in which the Russian threat to the US could escalate.

Since the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, Russia and China have looked to strengthen

ties. Western economic sanctions made this even more important to Putin.

The Russian economy is stagnating, people's living standards are falling and there are signs of growing discontent that may come to the boil.

Putin hopes that by forging a closer relationship with China he may be able to grab some of the country's economic vitality.

Offering

New fuel pipelines to China are being built, and Russia is offering to share some of its more advanced military hardware with China.

Biden's offer of a summit was an attempt to pull that process back.

"I think Biden's decision to meet with Putin certainly has created anxiety on the part of China, which I think it's a smart move by him," said Yawei Liu, a China expert with the Carter Center think tank.

For Putin, the summit was a success before it happened. He got the chance to be seen as the spokesman for a "world superpower", rather than the leader of a "rogue state".

But the White House is playing a far wider game. Biden is readying his forces for conflict with China.

At the moment that conflict is largely economic.

But the history of imperialism shows us how this type of competition can so easily turn to other, more deadly forms.

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Biden sees Russia as a relatively minor threat compared to China

Rape conviction figures show state fails victims

by ISABEL RINGROSE

WOMEN WHO have been raped are being systematically let down by the justice system.

The Tories have been forced to apologise for “failing” rape victims after the number of convictions for rape plummeted.

The government’s Rape Review, launched two years ago, has examined the slump in convictions.

In 2019-20, 1,439 suspects were convicted of rape or lesser offences in England and Wales—the lowest level since records began.

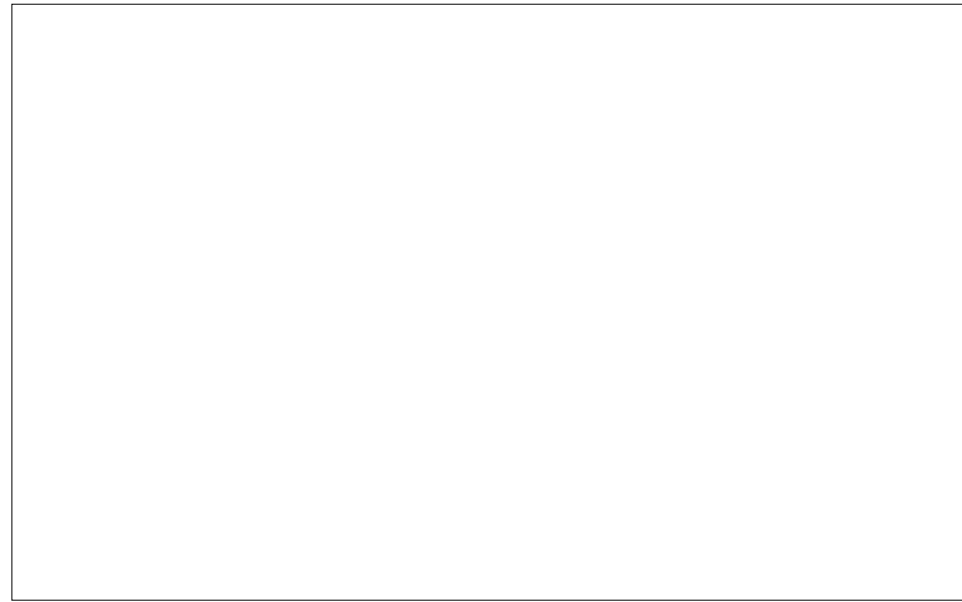
Sarah Green from End Violence against Women reacted to those figures by saying they “show starkly that we are right to say rape has been effectively decriminalised”.

Yet reports of adult rape to the police have doubled since 2015-2016.

In 2015-16 a total of 6,855 rape cases were referred to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) by police, with 4,643 prosecutions.

This is more than three times the number in 2019-20.

There are an estimated



PROTESTERS LAY outside New Scotland Yard after the murder of Sarah Everard

128,000 victims of rape and attempted rape a year, with only 1.6 percent reported cases resulting in a charge.

The first part of the report, written by home secretary Priti Patel states, “victims and the organisations that support them have felt badly let down in the past.

“This not the first piece

of work in this area, and the consistently low number of cases being charged and prosecuted has eroded trust.”

Patel then goes on to write about what she believes some solutions to the crisis could be.

“We are not prepared to accept that rape is just ‘too difficult’ a crime to prosecute.

We can, and must, do better.

“At the heart of this Review is a system and culture change to ensure that victims feel supported and able to stay engaged with their case” she adds.

“This combined with updated and stronger case preparation methods, as well as increased communication

between all those involved in the prosecution, should lead to more cases reaching court and more defendants pleading guilty.”

Justice secretary Robert Buckland QC and Patel added they were “deeply ashamed” by the spiralling trend of not bringing sexual offenders to account.

They are responsible for this system and should pay the price for its collapse.

The Tories claim they will now bring in reforms.

These include reducing cross-examination in court by conducting pre-recorded interviews and a recognition that only evidence about the complainant that is “relevant” will be used.

Wearing

But investigations could still include asking a victim what they were wearing or if they were drunk.

Complainants will also still have to hand over their phones for examination.

In March this year, the Court of Appeal refused to consider a campaigners’ challenge to how the CPS deals with rape cases.

Harriet Wistrich, director of the Centre for Women’s Justice said, “The most plausible explanation for the undoubted collapse in rape prosecutions arose from the CPS decision to change their approach to prosecution decision making and prosecutors becoming more risk-averse as a result.”

Buckland has now said he wants to move away from “the obsessive focus on the credibility of the victim”.

Emphasis will instead be placed on the suspect’s offending past.

The review said updating legal guidance on addressing rape myths and stereotypes will increase confidence in the judicial process.

This, it says, will allow greater numbers of victims to come forward.

But the problem isn’t just that victims don’t come forward, its that the system works against any real change.

If the killing of Sarah Everard has taught us anything it’s that the police and the Tories can’t be trusted.

Women’s oppression is institutional, and sexual violence is a symptom of this.

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GB News is a joke, but left can't sit back and laugh

Seeking to emulate 'shock jock' TV channels in the US, GB News launched last week hoping to find an audience on the angry right. Sophie Squire explains

THE hard right GB News channel hit our TV screens last week with not so much of bang as a barely audible grumble.

The sound failed repeatedly during the first days of transmission.

Viewers who came for their promised fix of "war on woke" were left wondering what was going on.

On day two after launch, not only did the station misspell the name of its star presenter Laurence Fox in its graphics, it plastered the words "Freedom Day" under Boris Johnson giving a speech on lockdown measures.

And, that's before all manner of trolls got in on the act.

They mocked the station by posting comments with ridiculous fake names for presenters to read out—which, unwittingly, they then did.

It's good to see lead presenter Andrew Neil and his has-been mates getting such a drubbing.

But the existence of the station, and its potentially large audience, ought to sound alarm bells on the left.

GB News had 150,000 people viewing during its first three-hour show—more than the BBC News channel and Sky News combined.

Some of those will doubtless have been people hoping to see a scrappy argument on TV rather than the staid fodder that passes for debate on mainstream programmes.

But the station will also have followers among racist Tories, and people way to the right of them.

The political task—and hope—of stations such as GB News can be seen in the functioning of its counterparts in the US.

There right wing shock jocks have



HARDLY A stellar lineup—Andrew Neil heads up his team of anti-woke warriors on the GB News TV channel

migrated from radio onto TV stations, such as Fox News. There they use a daily diet of prejudice to try and shape their audience into a coherent political force.

By taking up issues, including opposing Black Lives Matter protests and denouncing LGBT+ people, they set an agenda for the new hard right.

Of course, that strategy was given a huge boost by the election of Donald Trump as president.

But now that he has gone the

network of TV and radio stations once again play the role of an organising force for the right.

Presenters expect that their "attack lines" will be absorbed by viewers who will then repeat them to friends and workmates.

This is one of the key ways in which media play a role in the transmission of right wing ideas in society.

The pool of reactionary right wingers is not as big in Britain as in the US.

And even among those who are

on the right on important questions, such as immigration, many often embody all manner of contradictions.

For now, that places limits on how far to the right stations such as GB News can go.

But the fact that the current home secretary has appeared on the channel shows that it is getting some political support from the very top of society.

GB News may so far be a laughable failure, but the audience it is addressing is real.

Who bankrolls GB News?

IS GB News really the outlier, speaking up for the "common man"?

The station is funded in part by the US-based media giant, Discovery, which provided £60 million to produce the show. Discovery owns scores of TV channels in Britain and the US.

Two former Tory party treasurers, Lord Michael Farmer and Lord Michael Spencer, both put money into the channel. And private investment firm, Legatum, also invested.

Additionally the head of one of Europe's largest hedge funds, Paul Marshall contributed. According to the Sunday Times rich list Marshall is worth £630 million.

Viewers have been 'ad

SOME large companies think GB news is a bad place to advertise.

Cider company Kopparberg, Specsavers opticians, Octopus Energy and Swedish furniture company Ikea all pulled their adverts as the channel went live.

Some, including Ikea have since reversed their decision.

But the supposedly progressive supermarket chain Co-op says it will carry on advertising on GB News.

Tory Julian Knight, chairman of the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, is appalled by threats of boycotts of advertisers.

He told the Mail, "This is the worst type of cancel culture. GB News is bringing a much-needed perspective to our media landscape."

Channel against 'the elite' is filled with its detritus

"NOW IT is time to do news differently," said Andrew Neil, the face of GB News.

Given that in his time in the media Neil has been given newspapers to run and TV programmes to dominate, you might wonder why in the past he felt so constrained.

According to Neil, his new show won't be a rolling news channel like the BBC or Sky.

It will focus, instead, on "commentary".

This will give handpicked guests more

time to elaborate on their right wing bile.

The GB News team is a group of some of the most right wing and reactionary voices in Britain today.

They include disgraced presenters from other channels, including former ITV news presenter Alastair Stewart.

Stewart left his long running ITV gig after a number of his tweets were revealed.

Dan Wootton, former executive editor of The Sun newspaper heads up his own show.

Wootton casts himself as a lone warrior battling the monster of political correctness that has taken over Britain.

Ranted

In a recent column he ranted that "brutal cancellations [are] becoming a stain on society."

But fear of being silenced ought not to worry him. Wootton currently has a column in the Daily Mail and of course, his own TV show on GB News for

five days a week.

The anti-elite lineup also includes Mercy Muroki the Oxford-educated commentator who had a hand in writing the Sewell report.

This was the one that said institutional racism did not exist.

"Comedian" and author of Free Speech and Why It Matters, Andrew Doyle, is set to present a segment on the show called Free Speech Nation.

Perhaps he was brought on for balance. Doyle

describes himself as "left wing" and said he supported Jeremy Corbyn in the 2017 election.

But his main selling point is that he sees "identity politics", and the supposed threat to free speech posed by oppressed people making demands, as one of the great threats to Britain today.

Mainstream media is already filled to the brim with this stuff.

So much for GB News's claim to be "Doing things differently".

Setting of Sun

NOT all right wing media are reaping culture war successes.

The racist rag that is The Sun newspaper, is in trouble. Owner Rupert Murdoch recently reset the financial value of the paper to £0.

The newspaper's turnover fell by a fifth in 2020. And it lost its title of best selling paper to the Daily Mail last year.

Activists target a museum over links with Shell

Climate fighters protested at London's Science Museum last week. Meanwhile the Tories are failing to act on climate change, reports **Sophie Squire**

YOUNG CLIMATE activists protested at the Science Museum in London last weekend over its shameful links to oil giant Shell.

Members of the London branch of the UK Student Climate Network (UKSCN) say that the collaboration is blatant "greenwashing".

Greenwashing is a term used to describe corporations that use phony sustainability promises to cover up their climate crimes.

Shell partnered with the museum to fund its "Your Future Planet" exhibition. The exhibition will show off new climate technologies like carbon capture.

When UKSCN entered the museum to try and occupy it for a night they were met by over 30 police officers and threatened with arrest.

The group also draped a banner reading "Drop Shell Sponsorship" from one of the museum's balconies.

Fossil

UKSCN tweeted on Saturday, "The Science Museum would rather have kids arrested than drop their polluting sponsors, but we will not be silenced. The police protect fossil fuel interest. We know exactly what side they are on."

The group was not intimidated by the police presence and returned to protest at the museum last Sunday.

The museum is already under fire for its partnership with BP and Norwegian energy company Equinor.

While activists raged against the Science Museum, the Tories maintained their inaction—despite having making noises about fighting climate change.

Boris Johnson confidently stated at the G7 summit earlier this month that £500 million would go into the "Blue Planet Fund".

According to the prime minister the fund would aim to support developing countries to protect their marine environment.

BACK STORY

Oil giant Shell has teamed with the Science Museum in London and is holding an exhibition on climate technology

● But student-organised protesters gathered to demand the museum drops Shell's sponsorship last weekend

● Activists were met with hostility from the police

● Yet they continued their action with speeches, banners and a sit-in

But this fund is not new. In fact, it was proposed in 2019 as part of the Tory party manifesto.

For all of Johnson's insistence that Britain is leading the fight against the climate crisis, the government are failing.

One climate group has revealed that Britain is actually less prepared to tackle the climate crisis than it was five years ago.

The independent Climate Change Committee (CCC) found that the risks posed by climate change are not being properly prepared for by the government.

Professor Julia King is the chair of the CCC's adaptation committee.

She said, "The overall level of risk facing the UK has increased over the last five years and adaptation is not keeping pace with the rate at which the climate is changing."

The 1,500-page report finds that Tories have failed to arrange protection for flooding and adverse weather.

It's no surprise that the Tories are all talk and no action on tackling climate change. But the growing chaos cannot be left to worsen.

The mobilisations around the COP26 international climate talks in Glasgow in November must be built as big as possible to put pressure on world leaders to act.



PROTESTERS OUTSIDE the Science Museum in London on Sunday

PICTURE: TWITTER/ @UKSCN_LONDON

Train workers fight bosses' attempt to make them pay for the pandemic

by SAM ORD

RAIL WORKERS across Britain are fighting back against corporate greed by striking in battles over pay and conditions.

On the Tyne and Wear Metro in north east England, a coordinated joint union strike is set to begin next week.

RMT and Unite union members will strike for seven consecutive days from 28 June to 4 July. The action is in response to train manufacturer Stadler's imposed wage freeze.

Workers will also refuse to work overtime from 5 July.

In October last year Stadler won a £300 million contract to build new trains and to rebuild the Gosforth depot in Newcastle.

Stadler will also maintain the Nexus Tyne and Wear trains for the next 35 years.

The firm is trying to force through a pay freeze, despite the company recording profit growth of eight percent in 2020

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said, "It's frankly disgraceful that this wealthy global company should be trying to impose a pay freeze on staff who have worked throughout the pandemic to keep the North East moving."

"RMT stands shoulder to shoulder with our Unite colleagues in this fight for pay justice."

Eight days of strikes have also been announced by the RMT on East Midlands Railway each Sunday from 27 June.

Senior conductors are striking over the company issuing inferior contracts to some train guards.

Up to 200 train managers also voted overwhelmingly for action in a parallel dispute.

And ticket examiners and conductors on ScotRail are continuing industrial action in two disputes over pay.

Cancelled

Workers have been striking on Sundays since March, leading to most ScotRail trains being cancelled on strike days.

The RMT warned of a "summer of disruption" last month if the dispute wasn't resolved.

Workers have accused the operating company and ScotRail owner Abellio of breaching its own dignity and respect policies.

ScotRail then provocatively tweeted, seeking to turn football fans against the rail workers. The RMT warn this could lead

to violence directed towards workers.

Elsewhere in Scotland, action is also continuing on the Caledonian Sleeper.

The RMT is demanding that the Scottish government reveal how much ScotRail and Caledonian Sleeper have been handed under their Covid-19 Emergency Measures Agreements (EMAs).

In the initial EMA, which covered the March to September 2020, the operators were able to receive management and performance fees.

These can be worth up to 2 percent of the pre-pandemic franchise cost base.

But the Scottish government has backtracked from its commitment to publish this information in April 2021.

The RMT estimates that private company Abellio could have made in excess of £8 million during the initial EMA.

Serco—which operates the Caledonian Sleeper—could have pocketed over £600,000

The wave of resistance by union members is important to resist bosses' attempts to make workers pay for the pandemic.

Sign the ScotRail solidarity petition at bit.ly/ScotRailStrike

COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY WORKERS

Eleven colleges are balloting for strikes

by SOPHIE SQUIRE

WORKERS AT 11 colleges in England are balloting for strikes.

Ten ballots are over pay. A separate ballot at Capital City College Group in London is over pay, working conditions, and compulsory redundancies.

The pay gap between college and school teachers currently stands at £9,000 a year as further education workers have suffered real terms pay cuts of over 30 percent in the past decade.

But this year the employers' body, Association of Colleges, recommended a pay offer of just 1 percent. At ten of the colleges, UCU is demanding a pay increase of greater than 5 percent.

At Capital City College Group bosses are trying to make over 30 staff redundant, while investing millions into new "teacherless" training.

UCU union general secretary Jo Grady said, "Employers have millions more in the bank after government investment, so staff should not have to threaten to strike to be paid fairly."



LAUNCHING the strike ballot at City and Islington College last week

"The government talks of 'levelling up' and 'building back better' but if these slogans are going to have any actual substance, we need investment in our colleges and staff."

●The ten colleges being balloted over pay are—City College Plymouth, City of Bristol College, City of Liverpool College, Croydon College, Lambeth College, Sheffield College, South Thames Colleges Group,

Swindon New College, Truro & Penwith College, Weymouth College

■**ESCALATION TO more strikes and national support is urgently needed after University of Liverpool bosses launched a brutal attack on UCU members.**

Bosses have told workers taking part in a marking and assessment boycott that they will withhold 100 percent of their wages,

despite them being willing to carry out most duties.

University management said they will withhold wages until staff complete marking all assessments affected by the industrial action.

UCU members began the boycott as part of a campaign of strikes and other action over the university's decision to sack 24 staff from the faculty of health and life sciences.

CIVIL SERVICE WORKERS

More safety action at DVLA

SOME 700 workers at the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) planned to strike on Tuesday and Thursday of this week.

It was the latest action in a programme of rolling strikes over unsafe working conditions.

Members of the PCS union are in a long-running battle that has become a direct confrontation with the Tory government.

The dispute began after some 600 workers at DVLA headquarters in Swansea caught coronavirus.

After some well-supported strikes, PCS officials say they reached a deal with the DVLA—only for bosses to back away from it at the last minute.

The PCS believes Tory transport minister Grant Shapps intervened to scupper it.

Workers at the DVLA have since been on a programme of rolling action designed to cause disruption.

In a sign that the action is having an effect, the

DVLA was forced to issue a press release warning that "ongoing industrial action will directly affect DVLA's services."

"There will be delays in processing paper applications."

"Please do not phone to chase up your application during this time as we are dealing with all paper applications as quickly as possible and in the order in which they are received."

Bosses have also tried to bring in a private company, APS, to break the strike by printing 400,000 car tax forms.

PCS General Secretary Mark Serwotka said, "This blatant attempt at strike breaking shows DVLA and DfT are not interested in settling this dispute."

"Targeted action will continue at the DVLA for months to come unless the original deal, which both parties had agreed in principle, is back on the table."

Nick Clark

SCHOOLS

Pimlico, Redbridge battles

PIMLICO ACADEMY teachers in London walked out last week for two days.

They said they were fighting an unacceptable management style, an unsafe working environment and failure to communicate serious incidents properly with staff.

The two-day walkout by NEU union members was an escalation from the single strike day a week prior.

Following failed negotiations staff were set to escalate to three days of strikes from Tuesday this week.

Students, teachers and parents are all united in their fight against management.

The picket line has been solidly supported by all.

●Messages of solidarity to ruth.gibson@neu.org.uk

■**TEACHING STAFF** at Oaks Park High School in Redbridge, east London, planned to strike on Tuesday and Wednesday this week.

Workers are standing in solidarity with four victimised workers who used Section 44 of the Employment Rights Act to refuse to work in an unsafe environment in January.

This week's action is an increase following the single strike day last week.

●Messages of support to Bill.stockwell@neu.org.uk and Venda.premkumar@neu.org.uk

POLICE BILL

Gypsy, Roma, Traveller protest is set for 7 July

A SUMMER of campaigning against new anti-Traveller laws kicks off with a rally in Parliament Square, in London, on 7 July.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller campaigners are organising to resist the racist provisions in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill.

They will gather at 1pm in Parliament Square to launch a Summer of Discontent against the Bill and its intention to outlaw nomadic Gypsy and Traveller culture.

Drive 2 Survive co-chair Sherrie Smith said, "The Police Bill is the single biggest threat to the traditional way of life of Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers in our lifetime."

"If passed it will entirely eradicate nomadic life, give police the power to

seize Gypsy and Traveller homes, fine Gypsies and Travellers up to £2,500 and imprison those needing to follow a nomadic way of life because of a lack of safe legal stopping places.

"This would not be tolerated by any other ethnic group and we will not stand for our culture being targeted in this way."

Irish Traveller activist Chris McDonagh added, "As nomadic people that have roamed the lands we have lived on for our whole recorded history, to suddenly be told our way of life has no place in society is totally wrong and hurtful."

"We all live in a country that is supposedly proud of its acceptance and equality for all ethnicities and minorities, but we now see this is a lie. We are people and we deserve to exist."

CONSTRUCTION

Jobs fight at Amazon site

A BATTLE has broken out at the construction of a new Amazon Warehouse in Gateshead.

Electricians protested last Wednesday over labourers being employed to do electricians' work—connecting up electrical systems.

Some 60 workers refused to work.

Jim Harte, chair of rank & file electricians' group said, "SSE Enterprise Contracting are using unskilled workers to carry out skilled electrical roles."

"Workers will not tolerate this kind of behaviour on our sites. There is no such thing as an 'Electrical Mate' within our national agreements."

While polite noises were made in response from the main contractors, workers who took part in the protest were sacked last Friday.

A protest against the sackings at the site took place on Monday morning.

FERRY WORKERS

Out again at Woolwich

WOOLWICH FERRY workers in London are set for another nine days of strikes. The first is on Friday of next week.

This is in response to bosses at Transport for London (TfL) issuing a written warning to a second union rep.

The Unite union says this is a further case of victimisation of a shop steward.

The ferry has seen repeated strikes and disputes in recent years.

This led to TfL taking over its operation from the Briggs Marine Contractors Ltd in January this year.

Workers are also angry over pay, excessive use of agency staff and inadequate health and safety training.

The 57 workers plan 24-hour strikes on 2,5,9,12,16,19,23,26 and 30 July.

●Messages of support to onay.kasab@unitetheunion.org

ROUND-UP

■**CATERING WORKERS** at the Royal London Hospital in east London struck this week in a fight over management bullying and new rotas.

The Unite union members work for Sercro, the infamous NHS subcontractor.

They expect to be out for five days of strike this week, with more to follow if management do not agree to talks.

■**CONCIERGE AND** cleaning workers at the luxury West End Quay apartment block are balloting for strikes.

The UVW union members, who are mainly migrant workers, are outsourced to First Port UK property management services.

The union says workers are ready to strike over bullying and harassment, inadequate

sick pay and the slashing of their usual Christmas bonus.

■**A UVW union member** is taking The Royal Parks to the High Court in a judicial review.

She says that along with dozens of other black workers she is outsourced onto inferior pay and conditions.

■**USDAW UNION** members in Derbyshire are striking over the effects of a depot closure.

They work on a Marks & Spencer third-party logistics contract, operated by DHL at Long Eaton.

The site is set to close at the end of July, and the battle is over how much redundancy pay the workers will then receive.

They have held two strikes and plan more action.

FIGHT AGAINST TRANSPHOBIA

by ISABEL RINGROSE

LONDON TRANS+ pride was set to go ahead on Saturday of this week in the wake of rising transphobia.

The event's organisers said the march will be an opportunity "to unite our voices against the continued and increasing disregard for trans safety, healthcare and wellbeing" in Britain.

"We need to continue to put pressure on the government to invest in trans healthcare, accessible bathroom provisions and prison facilities, and to ban the forced surgeries for inter-sex children," they added.

Refused

The Tories have refused to reform the Gender Recognition Act despite a consultation that voted overwhelmingly in favour of changes to make the process of transitioning easier.

A court decision this year also banned puberty blockers for under-16s.

Tory Equalities' minister Liz Truss defended this wrongly claiming trans



TRANS+ PRIDE in 2020

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

youth are forced into irreversible surgeries. And the Tories have also denied non-binary as a legally recognised gender.

Defending trans rights is crucial. Arguments over gender identity have

become one of the nastiest battlegrounds for "free speech" defenders who demand their right to intimidate and repress people.

Attacks on the LGBT+ charity Stonewall shows how far transphobes will go to

deny trans people's rights.

One of Stonewall's 14 co-founders—former Tory MP Matthew Parris—accused the charity of taking an "extremist stance".

This was after Stonewall came out to defend trans

people. Transphobic accusations against Stonewall said it had misrepresented the Equality Act 2010 by giving "incorrect and potentially illegal" advice.

London Trans+ pride is an opportunity to show

resistance to top down transphobia and those who are fighting against the existence of trans people.

"They consulted us on our lived experience, and now it's their turn to listen. Let's show those in positions of power what a network of care and radical love looks like," the pride organisers said.

Support

During pride month, it's vital that socialists and trade unionists are out in support across the country for trans rights.

The radical history of Stonewall as a riot, rather than a corporate sponsored party, has never been more vital.

London Trans+ pride last year saw thousands take to the street to call for radical change—denouncing transphobes, the Tories and their system.

Demanding rights for trans people to live and self-identity is the real tradition of pride that needs to hit back at the wave of attacks.

London Trans+ Pride, Saturday 26 June, assemble 2pm, Wellington Arch, London

SCOTLAND

Mobilisations called after the SNP fails to push for Scottish independence

by CHARLOTTE AHMED

"WHAT ARE we waiting for?" is the collective cry from the independence movement in Scotland.

There is an almost overwhelming frustration at the lack of any movement from the Scottish National Party (SNP).

It is six weeks since the party was comfortably returned to the Scottish Parliament which, with the Scottish Greens, has a pro-independence majority.

There has been absolutely no progress, no plan and no urgency



MARCHERS AT an All Under One Banner protest in 2019

from the SNP with regard to independence.

This is despite the fact that the Tories have created a "Union Unit" in Westminster.

It instructs ministers to avoid calling Scotland a nation, sticks union jacks on everything and sends up some royals to embrace us in a unionist hug.

Born of this frustration, at least three new groups have formed as well as one new political party, Alba, started by the former leader of the SNP, Alex Salmond.

Alba did badly in the election, with no one elected but is benefitting

from disillusionment with the SNP. Fortunately, the grassroots movement is still active. Local Yes groups have revived after the long lockdown and are organising online meetings and small-scale demonstrations.

Bigger demonstrations are planned for the near future.

Now Scotland, a new grassroots membership organisation, is now committed to organising direct action and demonstrations as well as online meetings.

The demand that the Scottish parliament should have the right to call a

second referendum has been backed by the Scottish TUC union federation and the EIS education union.

There is debate over what tactics to adopt if and when Boris Johnson refuses to allow a second referendum.

Rightly there are calls for direct action and civil disobedience.

There are opportunities for socialists to argue for a broader campaign for independence that will take it in a more radical direction.

All Under One Banner rally, Saturday 26 June, 1pm-3pm, King Robert the Bruce statue, Bannockburn